

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020-2021

I am afraid that I cannot say that it gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's Report for the 2020/2021 LAHS year. I have so little to report.

2020 was a disappointing year for the Lower Albany Historical Society. After months of planning to bring you an exciting and topical programme to commemorate the arrival of the British settlers in the Eastern Cape in 1820, all but the first of our meetings had to be cancelled due to the threat of Covid 19. In fact, we have not met for over a year.

While we have not been able to meet, your committee has been discussing a possible programme of talks and outings and will be ready once it is safe for us to get together again. We sincerely hope that this will be soon.

The LAHS has always been an active society and our members have stayed extremely loyal during this trying time, faithfully paying their membership fees, and for this we are extremely grateful.

We will be having an outing to Southwell, and the Kariega Baptist Church on the 29th of April, and it looks to prove extremely popular. Of course, all Covid protocols will be adhered to, and as we will be outdoors most of the time, we will be able to socially distance without difficulty.

Our 2020 Toposcope Journal, a bumper Bicentennial edition, was produced and delivered to members in August and was well received. Our thanks are due to the editor, Sue Gordon, who produced her first edition in very trying circumstances. We have since been approached by the Rhodes University Library with a view to making the journal available on their Hosted Journal Service. They feel that it is of specific interest in terms of their mandate, as well as of interest to researchers. We have been able to trace electronic copies of the Toposcope as far back as 1971, and are in discussion with the Head Librarian, Technical Services on format and copyright issues at present.

It would be remiss of me not to make mention of the loss of one of our most experienced and enthusiastic committee members last year. Sally Poole has relocated to Cape Town, and we miss her so much. Her background in research at Cory Library, her contribution to the planning and organizing of our outings, her meticulous proofreading of the Toposcope Journal and her knowledge and enthusiasm made her a valuable and much-loved member of our committee. We wish her well in her new life in the Cape.

Our Treasurer, Doug Sutherland, will present the Financials to you, but I should mention that the Committee has agreed to give R500 to Historic Bathurst to assist with repairs to the Mill and Powder Magazine which were recently vandalized. It doesn't sound much, but we are not a wealthy society.

We remember Frank Allison, Raymond Morgan, David Cunningham, Brian Aylward, Graham Dickason (past LAHS President & generous donor to LAHS), June Bell, Tony Mann, Merwynne Jones (past LAHS Hon Secretary, Chair, and avid researcher, especially on Bathurst), who passed away during the year and we extend our condolences to their families.

It only remains for me to thank the Committee for their moral support, for their enthusiasm and good humour during the (sometimes long) committee Zoom meetings, and for the hard work involved in the production of our journal, the Toposcope.

Even though we have had no meetings, we would like to thank Pat Bailes and Robin Collett who arrange and serve tea at our indoor meetings, and Ed Hosek and Val Williams of Settlers Park for their technical support. And of course, to Settlers Park for the use of the Don Powis Hall.

Gwynn Crothall